DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 112 873 IR 002 583

AUTHOR	Markuson, Barbara Evans, Comp.
TITLE	The Midwest Regional Library Network (MIDLNET): A Progress Report to the Library Community. Draft of Final Report.
INSTITUTION	Midwest Regional Library Network.
PUB DATE	Jun 75
NOTE	41p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.76 HC-$1.95 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrative Organization; Budgets; Cost Effectiveness; Financial Support; Library Automation; Library Cooperation; *Library Networks; Library Planning; *Library Services; Objectives; Program Development; *Program Proposals; *Regional Cooperation; Regional Libraries; Telecommunication
IDENTIFIERS	MIDLNET; *Midwest Regional Library Network; Multitype Library Networks

ABSTRACT

A new organization is proposed that will serve as a regional library network for the midwestern United States: the Midwest Regional Library Network (MIDLNET). MIDLNET must meet four requirements in order to assure its success: it must meet the needs of the major academic research libraries in the area, it should be a limited sponsor network, it must allow administrative and decision-making roles to the states involved, and it must have an organizational structure that will not restrict potential services or activities. Conceived as a non-profit corporation run by a board of directors, the organization's five major objectives will be to: (1) reduce per-unit costs of library operations and services, especially through computer applications; (2) provide rapid and efficient delivery to library users; (3) coordinate and improve library planning and research in the Midwest; (4) provide a vehicle for area participation in federal funding for regional network development; and (5) coordinate a materials preservation program. After its initial three years, MIDLNET's funding will come from user fees and federal aid. (Author/SL)

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ED112873

DRAFT OF FINAL REPORT

The Midwest Regional Library Network (MIDLNET)

A Progress Report to the Library Community

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for the

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MIDLNET Project Steering Committee

Committee on Institutional Cooperation

Evanston, Illinois

June, 1975

IR002583

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

This report presents a plan for the Midwest Library Network (MIDLNET), a regional library network serving the Midwest. The report includes an organizational plan to allow administration of MIDLNET by a Board of Directors representative of the states and the major resource libraries in the region. Network services will be available, on bases to be determined by the Board of Directors, to all libraries in the Midwest.

The Steering Committee for this study feels a sense of urgency in getting MIDLNET operational so that the many topics identified during this study can be given continuing attention by a high-level central staff and guidance and direction by a larger, more representative group than a study team. Also, as will be shown in the report, there is a sense of urgency in bringing the Midwest into the emerging national library network at the earliest possible date to ensure that our needs are considered in national short- and long-range planning.

The establishment of MIDLNET is in line with policies at the national level as the following excerpts from the National Commission for Libraries and Information Science Draft of a National Program for Library and Information Services (March 10, 1975) indicates:

> "The Commission assumes that the nationwide network would not be a monolithic and authoritarian superstructure, but that it would form a shelter and framework for families of geographic and functional networks developed and interconnected according to a unified plan. There currently exist networks of varying sizes, all of which must be tied together, starting at the local and regional level and building upward.
>
> Interstate compatibity is mandatory if statewide networks are to be economical and efficient in the context of a national network. It should be emphasized that NCLIS regards the self-generating and on-going trend toward cooperative statewide and multistate networks as a positive step forward which should be encouraged and abetted with federal support.
>
> The National Program here advances the national network as a flexible, voluntary and evolving confederation of information resources. The government's role in building the network would be to: encourage the development of networks within and between the states, help establish and encourage the adoption of common technical standards, introduce computers and telecommunications for interstate use, and help establish protocol governing the

way requests and other transactions are handled by the network."

In surveying problems facing all libraries, in assessing the activities in the Midwest and in the nation, we believe that we are on the right track in organizing MIDLNET. The Midwest is the only major region in the U.S. that does not have a regional library network and the time has come. MIDLNET will not compete with any existing system but will be designed to utilize more broadly and to supplement what exists. The development of MIDLNET provides us with both an opportunity and a responsibility. We have much here in the Midwest to build on: strong public-oriented research libraries, national library leaders; expertise in many areas; strong foundations that could be a source of financial support. A number of documents prepared at the national level bring out the concept loud and clear that there is a need to share between the have and the have-not states so that all may have access to the rich bibliographic resources of our region. What we need is acceptance that this is the proper way to proceed; faith that we can improve our own situation and solve some of our own problems by working with others, recognition that librarians will increasingly be called to public accountability for the information services available to our citizens, and a willingness to act and to make commitments on the basis of these judgments. If we can do this, we can put it all together to build better library services for all of the people of the Midwest.

The Steering Committee recommends adoption of this Report. Organizational paperwork for MIDLNET has been completed. Internal Revenue Service recognition of MIDLNET as an educational tax-exempt organization is being sought. A bank account has been established to allow immediate receipt of fees and grants. Contacts on behalf of MIDLNET have already been made with potential funding organizations. Active recruitment for an Executive Director has begun to allow immediate Board action in selecting a candidate. MIDLNET will begin to operate immedidately upon the first Board of Director's meeting to be

called this summer. We strongly urge the support of all librarians in the Midwest for MIDLNET and are convinced that establishing this organization will, in the future, be regarded as a landmark in Midwest library development.

The Midwest Regional Library Network (MIDLNET) Origins And To Date Progress

Introduction

This report describes a new organization that will serve as a regional library network for the midwestern states. The report is organized in four major sections:

1. Background of MIDLNET
2. MIDLNET Organization
3. MIDLNET Objectives
4. MIDLNET Funding

The MIDLNET study concentrated primarily on the organizational problems and the administration of a regional network. The study did not include a detailed system analysis and costing of regional network systems, since these were clearly beyond the scope of the study. In addition, it was felt that such studies should more appropriately be conducted under the direction of the Board of MIDLNET itself rather than by an ad hoc study group.

As will be shown in this report, MIDLNET varies in many details from other regional networks that are established or operational. These variations stem principally from a recognition that the structure and organization of a regional library network should be based on the needs and characteristics of the area it serves.

A list of MIDLNET project consultants, Steering Committee, and Advisory Committee members is provided in Appendix A. The Committee on Institutional Cooperation and its Executive Director, Dr. Frederick Jackson, provided administrative support and professional expertise during this study. This generous assistance is hereby acknowledged.

Background and Conduct of the MIDLNET Study

This section of the report provides a brief review of the origins of this project, its administration and financing, the work accomplished, and information dissemination activities related to the project.

Project Origins

In a very real sense MIDLNET has grown out of a recognition of the limited capability of individual states to solve certain networking problems, especially those relating to development, maintenance, and access to large data bases. This problem was first identified by the Council of Wisconsin Libraries (COWL) when they found that many of the projects that they wanted to implement would require more support than could be provided within the state. The COWL group believed that this problem was not unique to Wisconsin and, accordingly, in April 1973 COWL sponsored a meeting which included representatives from Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota and Illinois. Strong interest was shown in an inter-state network and a committee was appointed to develop a plan of action.

In June of 1973 a second meeting was held and the group was enlarged to include representatives from Indiana and additional representatives from the original states. Various representatives agreed to provide position papers about certain contributions that an inter-state network could make to improvement of library service.

During the next year additional groups were contacted, a study proposal was developed, and a sponsoring agency was sought. In February of 1974, the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) agreed to accept sponsorship and to help with funding. Solicitations for project support were sent to CIC members and to other libraries that had shown interest. The wide-spread interest and support of a regional library network is evidenced by the fact that libraries and library groups provided a total of $37,500 from their local budgets to support this study. Support was received from both the core group of states represented by CIC and border states. Funds were received from the

11 members of the CIC (the big ten universities and the University of Chicago) each of whom paid $3,000 toward the study. In addition, $3,000 was provided by Iowa State University and $750 was received from the University of South Dakota and from the University of Northern Iowa. (Not all the funds came from academic libraries, the Wisconsin CIC assessment was provided by COWL which receives half of its income from state agency funding and which serves almost 300 public libraries.)

Two points need to be emphasized. The first is that this study has been funded by institutions who believe that inter-state cooperation is vital to improved library development and improved service to library users. No foundation or Federal funds were sought to underwrite this effort. Second, although the study funding came primarily from academic libraries, the concept has always been the development of services that would be available to all interested libraries and library agencies.

From the original organizers and the contributors an Advisory Group was formed and a Steering Committee was selected.[1] Dr. Frederick Jackson, Executive Director of CIC, has worked closely with these groups throughout the study and the CIC office has provided necessary administrative support. Mrs. Barbara Evans Markuson, an independent library consultant, was engaged to work as project director. Other consultants included Mr. Harry Martin, Associate Law Librarian, University of Texas Law School and Mr. Peter Barack, a member of the faculty of the Northwestern University Law School. Mr. Barack continues to serve as legal counsel to MIDLNET. Officers of the Steering Committee will continue to serve as interim officers of MIDLNET. These officers are: Mr. W. Carl Jackson, Dean of Libraries, Indiana University (President), Mr. John Metz, Librarian, University of Wisconsin at Green Bay (Secretary), and Dr. Frederick Jackson, Executive Director, CIC (Treasurer).

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1. See Appendix A for a list of Advisory Group and Steering Committee members.

Work Accomplished

The Study Group (Steering Committee and Consultants) addressed itself to the following major areas:

1. Review of factors arguing for or against establishment of a regional library network: evidence supported need for such a netowrk.

2. Review of organizational and legal factors involved in regional library networks.

3. Development of organizational structure for a regional library network with membership criteria.

4. Development of legal structure of regional library network including draft papers of incorporation, bylaws, etc.

5. Investigation of services identified as needed by academic libraries, state networks, and other groups submitting position papers or other information and review of other regional networks and documentation from the National Commission on Libraries and Information Services.

6. Development of qualifications for Executive Director of a regional library network and preliminary canvassing of potential candidates.

7. Development of a tentative three-year budget to cover basic central administrative costs.

8. Completion of all necessary legal work to allow a regional library network to begin functioning immediately upon convening the first meeting of the Board of Directors.

9. Preparation of interim and final project reports.

The Study Group met at least monthly from October 1974 to June 1975; some preliminary meetings were held in August and September to plan the work. In addition, there were many meetings of subcommittees assigned to complete specific tasks. During the project, the Project Coordinator visited several states and met with state librarians; public, school, and academic librarians; and directors and other staff members of state and regional networks including MINITEX, WILS, the Michigan Library Consortium, OCLC, and the Midwest Health Science Library Network.

Dissemination Activities

During this Project intensive efforts have been made, within the resources

available, to keep others informed of the progress and findings. A brief survey of this dissemination activity includes:

Three oral progress reports to the Committee on Institutional Cooperation

Three meetings with the Advisory Committee

One meeting with written and oral progress reports to Study sponsors

Oral presentations to meetings of Midwest librarians including:
- Wisconsin Library Association
- Illinois Regional Library Council
- Midwest Academic Library Conference
- Minnesota Library Association

Discussions with staff and committee members in network groups including:
- MINITEX
- Midwest Health Science Library Network
- Michigan Library Consortium
- InCoLSA Executive Committee
- Wisconsin Council on Library Development

In addition press releases about the study and its progress were sent to national, regional, and state library publications.

In April 1975 a meeting was held for the potential Board of Directors of MIDLNET. All state libraries, state networks, and Association of Research Library members in the extended MIDLNET region were invited. Mr. Alan Sevigny of the U.S.O.E. Regional Office in Chicago was also present. At this meeting each member of the Steering Committee and Mrs. Markuson provided a detailed discussion of various facets of the study, problems facing Midwest libraries, and the potential services and organization of MIDLNET. An open discussion followed these presentations and attendees received a summary of the proceedings. (A list of attendees to this important meeting is presented in Appendix B.)

In addition, individual members of the Study Group wrote local news releases, spoke to interested groups in local areas, made many individual contacts, and answered a rather voluminous correspondence related to MIDLNET. Even though the above efforts represent a considerable attention to information dissemination, in view of the small group and short time involved, and that

the Steering Committee donated their time to the project, there still is some feeling, of which the Committee is aware, that not enough attention was given to keeping the library community informed. For that reason the Final Report will be widely distributed within the Midwest and beyond in an effort to reach all interested individuals, institutions, and groups.

Looking Forward

In order that there be almost no hiatus between the promulgation of this report and the inception of MIDLNET as a viable, functioning organization, the Steering Committee has completed all necessary work to establish MIDLNET. MIDLNET is now a legal entity, is organized as a non-profit corporation, and needs only to be implemented by its Board of Directors. There are two major reasons why this action was taken.

First, completion of paperwork has given MIDLNET at least a six month gain; real work can begin immediately upon call of the first Board of Directors meeting.

Second, as will be shown, certain activities will depend upon availability of outside funding from private foundations. To obtain these funds, recognition by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service as a non-profit organization is mandatory. The necessary papers have been filed and by this action MIDLNET will gain valuable time in providing real services.

This report summarizes the many factors and considerations that led the Committee to conclude that a regional library network is a viable and necessary addition to the Midwest library community. We firmly believe that the Midwest library community will take immediate action to implement MIDLNET.

MIDLNET Organization

The Steering Committee spent considerable effort and energy on one question: Is a regional library network really needed in the Midwest? It is convinced that the answer to this question is: Yes. The major considerations leading to this affirmation are summarized below.

The Library Environment: All libraries appear to be suffering from shortages of funds, materials, space, and staff. There is reason to believe that, if these problems are not chronic, they will be with us for the foreseeable future. Research libraries are particularly hard pressed to meet their immediate user's needs and are having to cut back on traditional services to other libraries. A concerted cooperative program and imaginative new approaches may help solve some of these problems.

Library Technology: Automation and other new technologies can solve some of the problems that libraries face. However, many of our most basic services require complex systems and large data bases which individual libraries find increasingly difficult to support. It seems likely that sheer economics will force increasing cooperation in the area of library automation.

National Developments: A number of national library studies including those developed for the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, recommend a national network with state and regional library network components. Regional library networks exist or are being planned in the Northeast (NELINET), Southeast (SOLINET), Southwest (SLICE and IUC) and the West (WICHE). The Midwest is the only major library region without a regional network center or an affiliation with an existing network. This gap leaves a major library resource area without representation in the increasingly important library network community.

Midwest State Networks: This Study grew out of an early recognition by the COWL network group in Wisconsin of the limited potential for developing significant data bases at the state network level. Other studies have independently confirmed the conclusions of the COWL group. A number of state library networks or state-

wide service centers are operational in the Midwest. At present, there is no organization to facilitate exchange of information or the development of cooperative inter-state network projects. A regional network could serve this role.

Research and Development: A few years ago most of the major progress in library automation was made by research libraries with funds from private, state, and federal grants. It has become increasingly evident that research and development money is now earmarked for cooperative programs. If the libraries of the Midwest are to participate in this research and development and build upon already developed expertise and services, it seems likely that a regional network will be the most important vehicle for future research and development activities.

Organizational Requirements

Prior to consideration of specific features of the MIDLNET organization, a set of requirements was developed. It is our contention that libraries will judge a network primarily on what it can deliver. Therefore, emphasis has been placed on requirements judged critical to network success. These requirements are briefly discussed below:

(1) MIDLNET services must meet the needs of the major academic research libraries in the Midwest.

This requirement may strike some as undemocratic: this is not the case. It is absolutely imperative that MIDLNET include the major research collections in the Midwest. To do so, it must meet the information needs of major academic research libraries. For example, a data base with full bibliographic records can be designed so that libraries requiring limited data can extract what they need; however, it is very difficult and costly to upgrade a limited data base. The Library of Congress, in developing its MARC services, has taken the position that MARC formats must be geared to the needs of the libraries requiring the most comprehensive data set. If MIDLNET assumes a similar position, then the needs of the majority of libraries can be met by addressing the needs of the academic

library community.

This requirement is also basic to inter-state library activity. It is assumed that, in general, libraries will use inter-state networks for information, resources, and services not available within their local area or state. It is further assumed that these needs will be most frequent and critical for the major libraries within each state or for access to specialized materials. Therefore, an effective regional service must be able to meet stringent requirements for authoritative, complete, and accurate input, for large data bases, and for sophisticated service. To develop such services, it seems obvious that large academic research libraries will make the major contribution to regional data bases. It is essential, therefore, that these data bases, and associated services, meet academic library criteria.

(2) MIDLNET should be a limited sponsor network.

Most library networks are organizationally similar to library associations. Thus decision making is undertaken by the whole membership and annually elected boards administer the organization. This structure has already created difficulties and remains viable principally because networks do not yet have large memberships. MIDLNET will not perpetuate this unwieldy organizational structure.

As regional library networks develop and mature, they will provide services that impact on the daily operation of hundreds of libraries. Data bases and services must be guaranteed. Complex projects will involve long-range implementation and development. Administration, budgeting, and technological considerations will become increasingly complex. These factors argue strongly for stability and continuity in network decision making bodies. MIDLNET will have continuity through a permanent group responsible for its programs.

If present regional network organizations are projected into the future, decision making may well involve board meetings of hundreds of librarians or complicated mail balloting. This process will be slow, expensive and detrimental to effective action. (These problems are familiar to all who participate in national and regional associations.) Given the increasing cost of travel and

communication, the continuing energy crises, the geographical area involved, and the logistical problems that arise, it seems obvious that a more efficient organization is mandatory. MIDLNET will have an efficient cost-effective organization.

Based on these considerations it was decided that MIDLNET will be administered by a core, stable, representative group of sponsors who will administer the network on behalf of Midwest libraries. Organization should not be confused with service. Service will be provided, as appropriate, to libraries in the Midwest at costs reasonable for a non-profit organization. As will be shown, sponsors have been defined so as to allow equitable representation of states in the Midwest area and take into consideration the resources and network activity in the Midwest.

(3) States in the Midwest should have continuing administrative and decision-making roles in the MIDLNET organization by representatives with a natural responsibility for inter-state library cooperation and coordination.

MIDLNET will advance most rapidly if the sponsor group has a continuing and natural responsibility for inter-state library development. Three groups have been identified as meeting these criteria: state libraries or state library agencies, major resource libraries, and state networks formally organized to serve all types of libraries in the state. The rationale for each of these groups having a major role in MIDLNET is summarized below:

State libraries: state libraries or state library agencies, in most states, have a legislative mandate to plan and promote new library services within the state. Further, state libraries have an increasing role in network development and may well be the major focus for receipt and disbursement of federal funds for the national library network. State libraries, in many states, also play a key role in providing backup and support services to the medium-sized and small libraries in the state. In the MIDLNET area state libraries have been particularly

active in promotion and support of state network development and interlibrary cooperation; and participation in MIDLNET would provide an appropriate vehicle for continuation of this interest in a larger setting.

Major resource libraries: the major resource libraries have traditionally been initiators and innovators at the state, regional, and national level and, in most parts of the U.S. have been active in the development of regional library networks. Because of its tradition, size, and resources, this group of libraries has developed strong interests in inter-state activities and, in contrast to most large public libraries, has been active in promotion of library consortia, automated systems, and research and development projects because of their key role in effective marshalling of the resources of the area into a viable library network for the region, it is essential that these libraries participate in MIDLNET on a continuing basis. Therefore, libraries in the MIDLNET region that are eligible for membership in the Association of Research Libraries are eligible for representation on the MIDLNET Board of Directors.

State library networks: state networks, such as MINITEX, the Michigan Library Consortium, the Indiana Cooperative Library Services Authority, and others, operating as separate organizations serving all types of libraries should be represented in regional network development. These networks represent school, public, academic, and special library concerns and often are the major center within a state for cooperative library services. It seems likely that MIDLNET services would be made available to libraries within a state either through the state network, where one exists, or through the state library, in those states without library networks. Thus a state network or state library agency could identify those services which cannot be provided economically at the state level, as well as assess the potential interest in a proposed service, and provide valuable review and monitoring of proposed MIDLNET programs through state committees, and promote MIDLNET services and policies.

(4) MIDLNET must have an organizational structure that will not restrict

potential services or activities.

A few networks, including regional networks, were primarily established to provide cataloging services or to provide a mechanism for joining the Ohio College Library Center system. These networks actually function as single-service networks. MIDLNET should avoid any preconceived notions as to what services might be feasible in the future and should have a charter and by laws that allow for the greatest possible flexibility.

A later section lists potential services that were suggested by libraries and committees who provided input either during the MIDLNET study or in the preliminary work leading up to the study. The Board of Directors of MIDLNET should review these suggestions and identify services that could be provided to libraries in the Midwest should funding be made available to initiate the service.

Organizational Plan

This section of the report reviews the legal foundations for networks and presents the recommended network organization.

Legal Foundations: MIDLNET could be legally established as: 1) a federal-inter-state library compact, 2) an inter-state library compact, or 3) a non-profit corporation. A recent study of legal bases for networking prepared by Harry Martin for the SLICE network (Legal Aspects of Establishing a Regional Inter-State Library Network in the Southwest) states that the preferred legal bases for regional library networks are in the order listed above. The compacts have first preference because they give the network the status and support that accrues from legislative action. Non-profit corporations have more limited benefits and, in Mr. Martin's view, may prove unsuitable in the long run.

After giving careful attention to the points raised by Mr. Martin, the Steering Committee decided that, at the present time, MIDLNET should not be organized as a compact. The establishment of an inter-state compact would require a significant effort over a fairly long period. Even so, there would be

no guarantee of success since legislative action is never certain. It was felt that this approach, while patently more desirable in the long run, would nevertheless delay solution of pressing problems.

It was specifically noted that in the Midwest, in contrast to other regions, states have generally eschewed compacts and formalized federal-state relationships. Indeed, even Midwest libraries seem to have followed this pattern with the result that there is no major inter-state library organization or bibliographic center serving the area. It was agreed, however, that the success of MIDLNET might eventually pave the way for some type of inter-state support for library networks.

It was decided that MIDLNET be established as a non-profit corporation. However, to the extent feasible, the corporation has been structured so that it can serve eventually as a recognized component of the national library network and be eligible for federal and state funding. To this end, certain features of inter-state compact organization were incorporated in the MIDLNET organizational plan.

Establishing MIDLNET as a component of some existing organization was rejected primarily because no suitable inter-state organization exists in the Midwest. The Committee on Institutional Cooperation, under whose auspices this Study was conducted, might seem a logical umbrella organization. However, CIC is informally organized and thus does not have a structure that would permit it to undertake administration of a large, continuing network.

A legal review was made to determine whether the Midwest states have any significant variations in laws for incorporation of non-profit organizations. It appears that there are none and, therefore, the Steering Committee moved to incorporate in Illinois basically to provide continuity with the work already undertaken, since legal counsel had been retained in the Chicago area. It is important to understand that incorporation does not have anything to do with the physical location of the MIDLNET center - it could be located in any state in the Midwest. Investigation of factors related to MIDLNET location has not been

completed.

MIDLNET will obtain recognition from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service as a tax exempt organization. Although no problems are foreseen, MIDLNET would have to make any required adjustments in by laws to meet IRS criteria if these changes were requested.

Administration of MIDLNET

A proposed organizational chart for MIDLNET is shown on the following page. The specific duties, terms, conditions of participation, etc. are explained in more detail in the by laws which have been drafted and which have been sent to potential members. The MIDLNET by laws will be available for examination by any interested inquirer and are public records.

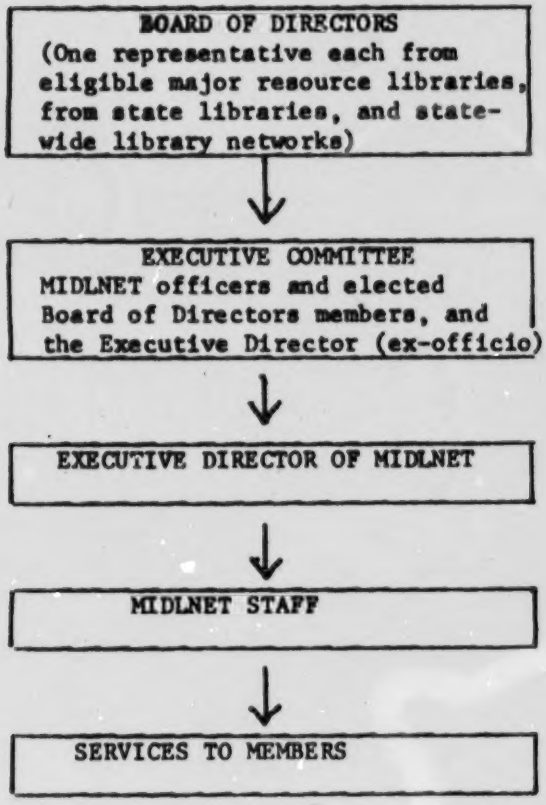
Defining the MIDLNET Area

The area in which MIDLNET would operate has not been precisely defined. The following states were included in correspondence, discussion groups and conferences related to MIDLNET: Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, Kentucky, Kansas, North Dakota, and South Dakota. It is not clear how the geographic area of a regional network should be determined. The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science reports have suggested several configurations. Some of the states above are in areas that border on two planned regional networks. The Steering Committee decided to let the potential members themselves determine that final configuration. That is, each state should decide for itself whether or not it should belong to the MIDLNET region.

Location of MIDLNET Headquarters

The Board of Directors will make the final decision on the location of MIDLNET headquarters. Criteria to consider include: easy availability of transportation for inter-state travel, convenience to meeting facilities, convenience to office services such as duplicating, printing, etc., convenience

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF MIDLNET


BOARD OF DIRECTORS
(One representative each from eligible major resource libraries, from state libraries, and statewide library networks)
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MIDLNET officers and elected Board of Directors members, and the Executive Director (ex-officio)
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MIDLNET
MIDLNET STAFF
SERVICES TO MEMBERS

to motel or hotel accommodations, and moderate cost for office and related building services. It has also been suggested that space might be provided free or a minimum cost by a MIDLNET member. Should the Board decide to accept such an arrangement it might also be possible to arrange for certain administrative tasks, such as bookkeeping, to be handled by the host organization. The Board should also give consideration to location in a building owned by a non-profit organization since many such groups charge fees that are lower than commercially run office buildings.

MIDLNET Objectives and Services

Introduction

MIDLNET will concentrate on five major objectives. It aims to:

1. Reduce per-unit costs of library operations and services.

2. Provide rapid and efficient access to and delivery of the library resources of the Midwest to library users.

3. Coordinate and improve library planning, research, and development in the Midwest.

4. Provide a vehicle for participation of the Midwest in Federal funding that will be available for regional network development and a voice for the Midwest in the emerging National Library Network, and

5. Protect the Midwest's investment in library resources through a coordinated materials preservation program.

It will be the responsibility of the MIDLNET Board of Directors to plan a program ensuring that measurable progress is made toward reaching these objectives. In the following section a suggested list of services and programs related to each objective is provided. Some of these can be implemented at once and will require little or no outside funding; others will be long-range and their initiation will depend upon outside funding until they become self-supporting. In the following section emphasis is on what will be done and not on the specific mechanism by which it will be done; the library world and the technical world move rapidly and MIDLNET must be free to take advantage of these developments. The emergence of national programs such as the Library of Congress plan for on-line bibliographic support service to regional networks will certainly cause a re-evaluation of many of the present services and systems now in use.

Objective 1. Reduce per-unit costs of library operations and services.

Although all avenues leading to cost reduction will be explored, MIDLNET will have as its top priority the establishing of a centralized computer-based facility to support an on-line bibliographic data base for monographs and serials.

Although the initial use of this data base would be to provide cataloging support for the major libraries and networks in MIDLNET, the data base system and services will be designed in such a way that it eventually can serve as a true on-line catalog, both union and local. In addition, the system should be designed to support, either centrally or on local computers, library operations related to ordering, check-in, process control, inventory management, and circulation. It must also be designed in such a way as to provide detailed holdings data in order to assure speedy and efficient interlibrary loan services and resource sharing programs.

Such a system is obviously a time-consuming development. At present it is recognized that a number of Midwest libraries, including sponsors of MIDLNET, are using or plan to use the OCLC facility for the production of catalog cards, MIDLNET, on an interim basis, will serve as a facilitating and contracting agent for delivery of OCLC services. MIDLNET will also be concerned with developing ways and means for an easy transition from OCLC to the MIDLNET system and, in the future, to integration into the National Bibliographic System.

Because a number of Midwest libraries, including sponsors of MIDLNET, have designed and implemented in-house systems for many library functions, MIDLNET will attempt to utilize these developments to benefit Midwest libraries either by modifying them, as appropriate, for use in a centralized system or by making them more widely available in the form of program packages for use on local computers.

Because it is recognized that any regional system, if it is to be successful, must be compatible with and able to interface efficiently with other regional and national systems, MIDLNET will be prepared to work with other agencies to facilitate the free exchange of both records and systems for processing these records. MIDLNET, in the pursuit of this objective will, in addition to working with other regional networks, attempt to develop a good working relationship with organizations such as the Library of Congress, the Association of

Research Libraries, the Council on Library Resources, the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, the Council of Computerized Library Networks and other regional library networks. With these groups, MIDLNET will pursue development of unified policies and standard practices.

Thus MIDLNET will provide the Midwest with the following specific short- and long-range services:

1. MIDLNET will provide an on-line union catalog to facilitate information access and resource utilization.

2. MIDLNET will provide telecommunications services to regional and national information data bases to reduce per-unit costs of using these services.

3. MIDLNET will provide a range of computer services to support library operations and services.

4. MIDLNET will serve as a contracting center for OCLC and other information services for all states desiring such services.

5. MIDLNET will provide access to on-line authority files.

A brief discussion of how these services relate to cost reduction is provided below.

1. On-line Catalog. An on-line union catalog will extend access to library resources among Midwest libraries. This union catalog, coupled with on-line local catalog access, will reduce costs by: providing a centralized data base to support local catalog operations, allowing resource sharing; providing researchers rapid location of needed items; lowering the cost of searching and locating interlibrary loan requests, reducing the mounting costs of card catalog maintenance, and facilitating cooperative acquisitions programs.

2. Telecommunications: The use of on-line data bases through telecommunications can be expensive unless communication costs can be reduced through technology, bulk purchasing of telecommunication services, or sharing of use of facilities. MIDLNET will explore methods of reducing costs of using present and future on-line services.

3. Computer Services: Local development of computer systems to support

library operations is expensive and time-consuming. MIDLNET will utilize a variety of means to make it cost-effective for libraries of all types to use computer services. Within the Midwest some advanced library systems have been developed for such operations as circulation, serials control, cataloging, producting of union lists, etc. These systems as well as systems developed in other regions can form the basis of centralized computer services or use can be shared by facilitating transfer of systems from one institution to another. This coordination of technological advance is thwarted at present because the Midwest has no focal point for sharing computer expertise and developments. MIDLNET will play a major role in bringing computer-based service to Midwest libraries.

4. OCLC and Other Services: MIDLNET can become a focus for contracting for computer-based services for libraries in the Midwest. Access to these services is on a contractual basis and MIDLNET could implement contracts on behalf of Midwest libraries thus providing reduction of central overhead costs, informed contract negotiations, training, accounting, and evaluation services. In the near future OCLC will be a vehicle for building data bases which can later be input to the MIDLNET system. A considerable data base will accrue by virtue of such use of OCLC by libraries in Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan and in other states. MIDLNET can also work to ensure that Midwest libraries have cost-effective access to major information data bases to support information retrieval activities.

5. On-Line Authority Files: Access to on-line subject and name authority files is essential to reduce costs of cataloging, catalog maintenance, and catalog searching and to promote standarization of data bases. The Library of Congress recently announced that it plans to provide access in an on-line mode to its authority files for networks only. That is, individual libraries would access these files through network arrangements and could not have access directly to LC. MIDLNET will explore this and other arrangements to provide authority

file information to Midwest libraries.

Objective 2. Provide rapid and efficient access to and delivery of the library resources of the Midwest to library users.

It has been estimated that the holdings of the MIDLNET region amount to at least 150,000,000 volumes and that at least $300,000,000 is spent annually for library materials, operation, and services in the Midwest (these estimates do not include all of the many small libraries in the region and are conservative). Even so, we still have a primitive technology for locating materials outside a given library and bringing these materials to users promptly. Through library networks and the advent of new technology we can, for the first time, improve access to these considerable resources and significantly improve the access to materials per dollar spent in materials location services. Specific services that MIDLNET will provide to support improved access services to library users include:

1) Coordination of union list of serials projects to allow rapid development of a standardized serials data base, with locations, for the Midwest. The Minnesota Union List of Serials (MULS) data base is the major data base upon which the national Serials Conversion (CONSER) project has been based. The integration of the MULS data base with other union list projects in the region could immediately provide improved access to serials.

2) Provision of direct access services to all data bases of interest to Midwest library users or promulgation of information on how data bases can be accessed when direct service is not cost effective.

3) Provision of SDI and other information dissemination services to library users.

4) Development of a coordinated inter-state delivery system to facilitate resource sharing.

5) Improvement of access to state and local documents for the Midwest.

(The Library of Congress has identified this as an area of special responsibility for regional and state networks since it does not have the resources to organize this material. MIDLNET would promote standarization of input and access of this material which would become part of the national data base via MIDLNET.)

Objective 3. Coordinate and improve library planning, research and development in the Midwest.

A critical problem in library planning, research, and development is the limited number of highly qualified specialists, particularly in the area of new technologies. Some libraries in the Midwest have such expertise available but, all too frequently, libraries are forced to work without the assistance of high-level expert assistance. We lack a method by which expensive and critical talent can effectively be brought to bear on library problems and this has been a great impediment to sound planning and the development and integration of new technologies into library operations.

MIDLNET will coordinate and provide mechanism whereby such talent can be made available. Within the Midwest we have some of the most expert library talent in the country as well as expertise in specialized technical areas such as systems analysis, programming, telecommunications, etc. MIDLNET will provide a vehicle for bringing this talent to bear on a wide range of library problems and will explore mechanisms by which these talents can be made available to libraries within the region.

Sharing of library expertise will, of course, have to be well planned and coordinated but it is feasible that we can improve library services and reduce the cost of planning and development by a coordinated use of existing talent. Thus MIDLNET can eliminate much redundant and costly planning, research and program development and make these efforts more effective. To meet this objective MIDLNET will:

1. Provide a forum for the cooperative discussion, review and coordination of library planning, research and development.

2. Provide an opportunity for the initiation of a regional research and development program thus providing more payoff from expenditures of manpower and support services.
3. Improve planning, research, and development through enhanced ability to obtain foundation and Federal funding and through access to a wide variety of needed expertise.
4. Provide continuing, formalized communication channels between major resource libraries, state libraries, and state networks. Through improved communications it will be easier to monitor new developments and to share the expertise that exists among us.
5. MIDLNET will provide access to technical skills (such as computer expertise, statistical expertise, etc.) that most resource libraries, state networks, and state libraries cannot afford to maintain on local staffs.

Objective 4. Provide a vehicle for participation of the Midwest in Federal funding that will be available for regional network development and a voice for the Midwest in the emerging National Library Network.

Regional library networks have been identified as an important component of the national library network. As yet the national library network is still a concept on paper but there are signs that significant developments and plans are already underway that will bring parts of it into being fairly soon. The Midwest cannot take a passive role in this development. The structure of the National Library Network is of vital concern to all libraries and MIDLNET should take an immediate role in drawing attention to the needs and contributions of the Midwest in such a national plan.

The Library of Congress has underway planning for its National Bibliographic System. This system will be completely automated over the next few years and is

being designed to serve only those recognized and fully established (regional) library networks. The Library of Congress thus plans to meet and assist the national library system for automated services only through and with networks (non-automated services would continue to be made available on an individual library basis). MIDLNET will, then, play a vital role in bringing automated LC services to libraries in the Midwest.

The design and funding plans for the national network are underway and we cannot afford to be left out of these developments. MIDLNET will work actively to:

1. Provide a framework for the integration of the Midwest into the National Library Network.
2. Provide a vehicle for communicating Midwest library needs to national planning and funding groups.
3. Promote education concerning the use of national bibliographic standards and procedures in the Midwest.
4. Represent the Midwest in appropriate national bodies, and
5. Ensure adequate Federal financial support for regional library networks.

Objective 5. Protect the Midwest's investment in library resources through a coordinated materials preservation program.

The Research Library Group's statement on preservation applies equally to Midwest libraries.

"No problem confronting research libraries is more alarming than the physical disintegration of hundreds of thousands of volumes now on their shelves."

MIDLNET will give attention to this vital area by:

1. Serving as a center for exchange of information on preservation problems, techniques, and programs.
2. Working with other organizations addressed to materials preservation.
3. Establishing a preservation center for materials preservation and restoration on a cooperative basis.

MIDLNET Costs/Benefits

Costs

The funds to underwrite sponsorship of MIDLNET for a basic central staff for the initial three years will come from three sources:

1. Major resource library sponsors.
2. State library sponsors.
3. Formally organized state network sponsors.

The basic budget will allow MIDLNET a guaranteed three-year funding for central administration, project development, and management. This funding will be supplemented by foundation and Federal grants that will be applied for as soon as MIDLNET is operational. After the three-year period it is planned that MIDLNET will derive its support from service fees and from Federal funds for regional library networks as specified in documents emanating from the U.S. Government.

The proposed basic budget will allow MIDLNET to begin operations now and sponsors are encouraged to take immediate action. Three payment methods are available and all sponsors are requested to underwrite $10,000 of MIDLNET operations. The payment options are:

a. One payment of $10,000 in 1975/76.

b. Two payments of $5,000 one during 1975/76 and one in 1976/77.

c. Three $3,500 payments due 1975/76, 1976/77 and 1977/78.

Potential sponsors will receive information about transferring these funds to MIDLNET. A proposed budget has been prepared for presentation and action at the first Board of Directors meeting. This budget is based on an initial capitalization of approximately $250,000.

Benefits to MIDLNET Members

In this day of limited library budgets, each potential MIDLNET member will be faced with the need to justify the $10,000 fee for establishing MIDLNET. What

benefits will accrue from joining MIDLNET and will they be worth $10,000 over the next three years? Some suggested benefits are listed below:

For State Libraries: State libraries play a leading role in planning existing library services, in evaluating proposals and projects, in interpreting new developments, and, by all indications, will have an important role in national library network implementation. However, few state libraries in the Midwest have been able to develop much capability in the area of new technology and would find it difficult to compete for, and to keep, technical expertise on their staffs. State libraries also have the responsibility for developing five-year plans to be submitted to the Federal government and, in developing such plans should, as a minimum, show some evidence of keeping abreast with new library technology and methods and with developments in other regions and areas. State libraries should obtain the following benefits from MIDLNET:

1) Help in monitoring current and new technologies.
2) Exchange of information with other Midwest states and state networks on a continuing, formalized basis.
3) Receive advisory assistance from other MIDLNET members and MIDLNET staff on specific areas of concern.
4) Coordinate programs and explore potential of developing joint programs with MIDLNET.
5) Share staff and consultant expertise through MIDLNET.
6) Conduct projects on behalf of MIDLNET.
7) Improve potential of more favorable position for outside funding, e.g., from foundations and government agencies, through cooperation with MIDLNET.
8) Integrate state planning with major resource library, state network, and regional planning.
9) Provide professional development to staff through participation in MIDLNET forums.

For State Networks: Directors of state networks are faced with building new organizations for which there are precious few guidelines and for which budgets are limited. Many of these groups will be addressing the same problems, e.g., use of OCLC, development of union lists, development of interlibrary loan, delivery systems, etc. State network directors in addition may work in more isolation, organizationally, than will other MIDLNET members. Informal channels have, to some extent, already been established between state network directors. However, such communication is on a piecemeal basis and it is difficult to keep abreast of what is going on. For state networks participation in MIDLNET would bring many benefits. MIDLNET will work to:

1) Help monitor current and new technologies.
2) Exchange information on a continuing, formalized basis.
3) Identify relevant projects, studies, etc., within the MIDLNET region and in other regions.
4) Coordinate state network programs within the region.
5) Share staff expertise through MIDLNET.
6) Develop joint programs through MIDLNET.
7) Minimize duplication of efforts in reserach and development projects and preparation of proposals.
8) Improve funding by participation in regional networks.
9) Keep member networks abreast of new developments at a lower cost than by individual effort.
10) Provide professional development through MIDLNET forums.
11) Provide network members with new services through MIDLNET, and access to the region's bibliographic resources.

For Major Academic and Other Resource Libraries: Major resource libraries are increasingly faced with two serious problems:

1) Continuation of high quality collections and services with decreasing budgets or budgets limited by inflation, and

2) Coping with increasing demands on services and collections from both direct and indirect user clientele.

All of the state, regional, and national network plans rest rather firmly on the assumption that resource libraries will continue to flourish and that it will be possible to tap into these libraries for services, for materials, and for staff expertise. None of these plans make clear the degree of recompense for the additional burdens that such systems will place on these libraries. Thus there is uncertainty about future demands coupled with uncertainty about how libraries can serve immediate local needs during this period of financial strain.

To address the problem of the role of the major resource library in regional and national networks, MIDLNET will work to ensure that a recognition of the value of services and financial support is adequately provided for in national and regional planning. MIDLNET will be a strong spokesman for rational and fair funding of the national library network and for a fair share of the national network funding to be returned to the regional and state level.

To address the more immediate survival problem, research libraries need to examine every operation to determine whether costs can be reduced through cooperation, automation, or improved manual methods. Although these problems are the concern of various national groups, it seems reasonable to experts that smaller forums will be required to allow detailed assessment of and solution of many common problems. For example, the old Columbia, Chicago, and Stanford project found that cross-country development was difficult and concluded that geographic distance, when too great, could be a severe impediment to real progress. Thus MIDLNET might actually be more effective in solving some problems than national programs can be.

MIDLNET will give attention to the major role of resource libraries in network development and will become a major vehicle for consideration of problems related to these libraries. Major resource libraries should obtain the following

benefits from participation in MIDLNET:

1) MIDLNET would provide the first mechanism in the Midwest to provide continuing attention to the problems of major resource libraries. State networks cannot solve these problems because there are too few of these libraries in any Midwest state to allow effective development of programs and projects.

Summary

MIDLNET will provide services to all types of libraries in the Midwest and will provide a coordinating and focal point for the entire region. MIDLNET services will assist each library, large or small, in its goal of fully meeting the informational needs of its users. By working together through MIDLNET the resources of other states will serve as a back-up to state-wide services. Thus the services in each state will be strenghtened as the region is strengthened through MIDLNET. Without MIDLNET, it is difficult to see how these benefits could be achieved. The formation of MIDLNET will in the future be looked upon as a landmark in the development of library services in the Midwest.

APPENDIX A

MIDLNET Steering Committee

Dean W. Carl Jackson
University Librarian
Indiana University
Committee Chairman

Mr. T. John Metz
Director of the Library
University of Wisconsin-Green Bay
Committee Secretary

Mr. James P. Riley *
Executive Director
Federal Library Committee

Mr. Ralph Hopp
Director of Libraries
University of Minnesota

Mr. John P. McGowan
University Librarian
Northwestern University

Mr. Charles Sage
Coordinator of Automated Library Services
Iowa State University

Dr. Frederick H. Jackson
Director
Committee on Institutional Cooperation

* Mr. Riley, former Director of Libraries, Marquette Universities and member of COWL, served as Chairman of the original planning group out of which the MIDLNET study grew. In January 1974 he became Executive Director of the Federal Library Committee; he is Network Director of the Federal Libraries Cooperative Cataloging project, non-voting member of the OCLC Board of Trustees and founding member of the Council of Computerized Library Networks.

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APPENDIX B

Meeting of Potential MIDLNET Sponsors, April 11, 1975

List of Attendees

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